Contents at a Glance

Introduction 1

Part 1: Starting Out: Let the Dinking Begin! 5

CHAPTER 1: Welcome to Your New Favorite Sport 7
CHAPTER 2: Playing by the Rules 15
CHAPTER 3: Shifting into Gear: Equipment and Apparel 37
CHAPTER 4: Heading to the Courts 61
CHAPTER 5: Transitioning from Other Sports: You Can Do This! 81

Part 2: Getting into the Swing of Things 97

CHAPTER 6: Building Solid FUNdamentals 99
CHAPTER 7: Starting the Point: The First Three Shots 119
CHAPTER 8: Dinking: The Game within a Game 141
CHAPTER 9: The Big Thrill: Volleys, Smashes, and Lobs 157
CHAPTER 10: Achy, Breaky: Preventing Injuries and Managing Physical Limitations 177

Part 3: Mastering Pickleball Strategy 191

CHAPTER 11: Playing Smarter: Basic Doubles Strategies 193
CHAPTER 12: Diving Deeper: Intermediate to Advanced Doubles Strategies 219
CHAPTER 13: Going Solo: Singles Strategy 245

Part 4: Improving and Competing: Living with Obsessive Pickleball Disorder (OPD) 257

CHAPTER 14: Leveling Up: Advanced Skills You'll Need 259
CHAPTER 15: Strengthening Your Mental Game: Use Your Noggin! 289
CHAPTER 16: Improving Your Game: DIY or with an Expert 309
CHAPTER 17: Playing Tournaments 329

Part 5: Enjoying the Wider World of Pickleball 353

CHAPTER 18: So Social: Jumping into the Pickleball Scene 355
CHAPTER 19: Becoming More Involved 373

Part 6: The Part of Tens 385

CHAPTER 20: Ten Pickleball Pet Peeves 387
CHAPTER 21: Ten Common Pickleball Mistakes and How to Fix Them 395

Glossary 403

Index 413

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1
About This Book 1
Foolish Assumptions 2
Conventions Used in This Book 3
Icons Used in This Book 3
Beyond the Book 4
Where to Go from Here 4

PART 1: STARTING OUT: LET THE DINKING BEGIN! 5

CHAPTER 1: Welcome to Your New Favorite Sport 7
Who's Playing Pickleball? Everyone! 8
Pickleball in a Nutshell 9
Getting Everyone in on the Act 10
Discovering the Benefits of Pickleball 12

CHAPTER 2: Playing by the Rules 15
First Things First: Safe Pickleball Is No Accident! 16
Looking at the Layout of the Court 17
Order on the Court: Learning the Basic Rules 18
Serving things up 18
The Two-Bounce Rule 20
Starting positions 20
At fault: Ways to lose the rally 22
Non-volley zone: It's hot in the kitchen! 22
Knowing the Score 26
Doubles scoring: Easy as 0-0-2 26
A play-by-play example of scoring in doubles 28
Singles scoring: Know your odds (and evens) 32
Rally scoring: Perhaps coming to a court near you 33
Making Line Calls 34
It's in the Rule Book! More Rules to Know 35

CHAPTER 3: Shifting into Gear: Equipment and Apparel 37
You Can't Take the Court without a Paddle 38
Paddle standards: The long and the short of it 38
Understanding paddle technologies 39
Picking your perfect paddle shape and grip 41
Weighing your options 43

Choosing your first paddle 45
Choosing your next paddle 45
Pickleball Is Nothing without Pickleballs 46
Ball standards: It's not a wiffle ball! 47
Counting the holes: Indoor versus outdoor balls 47
Getting touchy feely: Hard versus soft balls 48
Deciding which balls to buy 49
Pickleball Fashion (an Oxymoron?) 50
From the catwalk to the courts 50
Sliding into suitable shoes 51
Headwear for form and function 52
Protective eyewear: Still cheaper than your co-pay 54
Going Gaga for Gadgets and Accessories 54
Bag it up 55
Grasping at grips, gloves, and overgrips 55
Unpacking the world of portable nets 56
Investing in a ball machine 57
Buying equipment locally and online 58

CHAPTER 4: **Heading to the Courts** 61
It's All About That Court, 'Bout That Court 62
Playing on outdoor courts versus indoor courts 62
Playing on dedicated versus multiuse courts 65
Joining in at public versus private venues 66
Building your own home pickleball court 66
Wanna Play? Finding Courts and Players Near You 70
Referencing Places2Play 70
Using PlayTime Scheduler 71
Reaching out to USA Pickleball Ambassadors 71
Searching social media 72
Picking Up on Pickleball Etiquette 72
Striving to be safe, courteous, and honest 72
Understanding pickleball culture: OMG! (One more game!) 74
Even more reasons why you should play pickleball 76
Navigating drop-in play rotation 78
Playing nice: Being a good neighbor 79

CHAPTER 5: **Transitioning from Other Sports: You Can Do This!** 81
Making the Leap from Other Racquet and Paddle Sports 82
Tennis 82
Badminton 84
Racquetball 85
Table tennis 86

Transferring Skills from Non-Racquet Sports 88
Volleyball 88
Basketball 89
Baseball/Softball 91
Soccer 92
Martial arts 93
Enjoying Pickleball As Your First Sport 95

PART 2: GETTING INTO THE SWING OF THINGS 97

CHAPTER 6: Building Solid FUNdamentals 99
Getting a Grip 100
The versatile continental grip 100
The eastern forehand grip 101
Getting the feel for proper grip pressure 102
Ready, Set, Go! Perfecting Your Ready Position 103
Out of the blocks: Taking a stance 103
Keeping your chin and paddle up 106
Using your nondominant hand 107
Using Good Upper-Body Mechanics 110
Contacting the ball out in front 110
Creating compact strokes 112
Achieving topspin 114
Understanding Lower-Body Mechanics 114
Finding your strike zone 115
Footing the bill: Effective footwork 116
Gettin' shifty: Watching for weight shift 116

CHAPTER 7: Starting the Point: The First Three Shots 119
Serving It Up 120
Keeping it legal 120
Preparing to serve: This is your moment! 122
Mastering Serving Mechanics 123
Settling on serving targets 128
Serve and step back (more than just a dance move) 128
Return to Sender 130
Finessing the forehand groundstroke 130
Fear not the backhand groundstroke 132
Realizing your return of serve goals 133
Hitting the All-Important Third Shot 135
Drop it like it's hot 136
Driving it home 139

CHAPTER 8: **Dinking: The Game within a Game** 141
Dinking Footwork: Calm Feet, Calm Mind 142
Taming the tap dancing 143
Avoiding the cross step. 144
Dinking Strokes for Dinking Folks 146
Extending the follow-through: Make it pretty! 147
Slowing your roll 149
Protecting your hoop 150
Think before You Dink 152
Offensive dinking: Making a hole and hitting through it 152
Defensive dinking: When things are not going well 153
Patience, patience, patience 155

CHAPTER 9: **The Big Thrill: Volleys, Smashes, and Lobs** 157
Vying with Vicious Volleys. 158
Punch volleys 159
Swinging volleys. 161
Block volleys. 162
Drop volleys 168
Crushing It with Overhead Smashes 170
Loving Those Lobs. 172
Playing to the Crowd with Trick Shots 174

CHAPTER 10: **Achy, Breaky: Preventing Injuries and Managing Physical Limitations** 177
Warming Up Properly 177
Warming up your body. 178
Warming up your game 179
Moving Safely and Efficiently 180
Preventing Common Injuries. 181
Navigating Physical Limitations. 186
Making the best of mobility issues 186
Dealing with vision issues. 188
Playing wheelchair pickleball. 188
Understanding the rules for players with disabilities 189

PART 3: MASTERING PICKLEBALL STRATEGY 191

CHAPTER 11: **Playing Smarter: Basic Doubles Strategies**. 193
Recognizing the Four Phases of a Doubles Point 194
Serving and returning (Phase 1) 194
Transitioning to the line (Phase 2). 195
Dinking (Phase 3). 197
Attacking, counterattacking, and resetting (Phase 4). 198

Getting into Position 199
Staggering 200
Funneling 201
Paddle tracking 202
Staying in your lane 204
Keeping forward pressure 205
Figuring out who's got the middle 206
Communicating with Your Partner: Great Minds Dink Alike! 207
Calling the ball: "Me! You!" 207
"Let it go!"/"Bounce it!" 208
"Switch!"/"Stay!" 209
Strategizing and connecting between points 209
Calling time-out 210
Selecting the Right Shot 211
Visualizing the upside-down traffic signal 211
Understanding time and space: Depth, angles, and moments of opportunity 213
Playing the odds: High-percentage pickleball 215

CHAPTER 12: **Diving Deeper: Intermediate to Advanced Doubles Strategies** 219
Using Dinking Patterns 220
Retrieving Lobs Successfully 223
Straight-on lob retrieval 224
Diagonal lob retrieval 225
Hitting a lob recovery shot 226
Practicing an ounce of prevention 226
Going Hunting: Drop and Hunt 227
Shaking It Up with Shake 'N' Bake 229
Stacking and Switching 231
Choosing your types of stacking 233
Knowing the pros and cons of stacking 234
Using hand signals 236
Beating Those Bangers 239
Making Things Awkward 241

CHAPTER 13: **Going Solo: Singles Strategy** 245
Understanding the Phases of a Singles Point 246
Serving and returning (Phase 1) 246
Transitioning to the kitchen line (Phase 2) 247
Dinking (Phase 3) 248
Attacking (Phase 4) 249
Winning Singles Strategies 250
Go big on your serve 251
Beat your opponent to the net 251

Hit to your opponent's weaker side 252
Make them move. 253
Recover quickly 253
Improving Your Doubles Play through Singles 254

PART 4: IMPROVING AND COMPETING: LIVING WITH OBSESSIVE PICKLEBALL DISORDER (OPD) 257

CHAPTER 14: **Leveling Up: Advanced Skills You'll Need** 259
Preventing Pop-Ups: Six "Scientifically" Proven Causes 260
Controlling the Pace 265
Sending unattackable balls 265
Resetting the rally 267
Defending against attacks 268
Using Spin Effectively: Spin It to Win It! 271
Serving with spin 272
Returning with spin 274
Dropping with topspin or backspin 275
Spinning your dinks. 276
Handling your opponent's spin 277
Relishing the Attack. 278
Poaching: Not just for eggs 279
Surprising your opponents with an Erne (or a Bert) 282
Hitting the Around the Post (ATP) shot 286
Attacking with flicks and rolls 287

CHAPTER 15: **Strengthening Your Mental Game: Use Your Noggin!** 289
Keeping Patient and Focused 290
Assessing Opponents' Strengths and Weaknesses 291
Developing Anticipation Skills 293
Reading your opponents 293
Having a plan 295
Adapting to Unfavorable Weather Conditions 296
Maintaining a Positive Attitude: I Dink I Can, I Dink I Can 298
Developing your on-court presence 299
Talking to yourself as though you're talking to a friend. 300
Supporting your partner. 301
Comparing yourself to others ("Nothing Compares 2 U") 302
Salty Situations: How to Dill 303
Dealing with nerves. 303
Getting over "the yips" 305
Playing with unruly opponents: Bad line calls and more. 307

CHAPTER 16: **Improving Your Game: DIY or with an Expert** 309
Practice, Practice, Practice 310
Practicing two-, three-, and four-person drills 310
One is the loneliest number: Doing solo drills and wall drills. . . .313
Just the two of us: Playing skinny singles. 314
Practicing while you play 314
Improving while playing up or down in skill level. 316
Improving when playing the same people all the time 317
Practicing through visualization techniques 318
Learning from watching live pickleball. 319
Learning online (Be careful what you watch) 320
Taking Lessons, Clinics, and Camps: The Sweet and the Sour 321
Choosing the right coach for you 321
Coaching certifications 323
Getting the most out of instruction 323
Dealing gracefully with unsolicited advice. 324
Your Own Point of View: Using Self-Assessment Tools 325
Doing your own video analysis 326
Using match-charting tools 326

CHAPTER 17: **Playing Tournaments** 329
Understanding Different Tournament Formats and Types. 330
Round robins: We all get a turn. 331
Double elimination: The "Two and Out Club" 331
Single elimination with consolation 333
Sanctioned versus non-sanctioned tournaments. 333
Knowing Where You Stand: Player Ratings 334
Defining the digits: Official skill-rating definitions 335
Tuning in to tournament rating systems 336
Walking the Line: Tournament Roles and Expectations 338
Expectations for players. 338
Calling 'em as they see 'em: Referees and line judges. 339
Cheering appropriately: Coaches and spectators. 342
Putting Yourself Out There: Tips for Your First Tournament 343
Choosing a doubles partner 343
Knowing what to bring 344
Setting expectations for tournament day 345
Maintaining your mental focus 346
Using time-outs wisely 348
Reflecting after the tournament 349
Breaking Up Is Hard to Do: Changing Partners. 350

PART 5: ENJOYING THE WIDER WORLD OF PICKLEBALL 353

CHAPTER 18: **So Social: Jumping into the Pickleball Scene** 355
Joining a Pickleball Club 356
Enjoying the benefits of a club 356
Forming a new club 357
Playing in Ladders and Leagues 359
Organizing Fun Events 360
Running round robins, mixers, and scrambles 360
Letting your creativity run wild: other fun event ideas 361
Traveling and Pickleball: *Always* pack a paddle! 362
Meeting up with the locals for casual play 363
Enjoying pickleball entertainment venues 363
Joining organized pickleball getaways 364
Training clinics and camps 365
Getting to the Net: Keeping Up Online 366
Magazines, newsletters, and blogs 366
Social media 367
Apps and websites 368
Podcasts 369
Videos 370
Following the Pro Tours 370
Association of Pickleball Professionals (APP) 371
Pro Pickleball Association (PPA) 371
Major League Pickleball (MLP) 372

CHAPTER 19: **Becoming More Involved** 373
Training to Be a Referee or Line Judge 373
Volunteering as a USA Pickleball Ambassador 375
Joining Committees 376
Growing Pickleball in Your Community 377
Advocating for courts: Working with local government 378
The kids are all right: Junior pickleball 380
Introducing pickleball to others (The gift that keeps on giving!) 381

PART 6: THE PART OF TENS 385

CHAPTER 20: **Ten Pickleball Pet Peeves** 387
Ignoring Other Players' Goals and Skill Levels 388
Being Rude 388
Being Too Hard on Yourself 389
Delaying the Game 390

Being Ignorant of Rules and Scoring 390
Calling the Ball on Both Sides of the Net 391
Losing Your Temper 391
Not Taking Turns on the Courts 391
Hanging Back from the Kitchen Line 392
Not Bringing Any Balls 392

CHAPTER 21: **Ten Common Pickleball Mistakes and How to Fix Them** 395
Creeping 396
Using the Windshield Wiper Backhand 396
Hitting with "Wristiness" 397
Sprinting to the Kitchen Line after the Third Shot 397
Popping the Ball Up 398
Using the Bowling Serve 398
Failing to Get to the Line (Or Hold It) 399
Relying on the Elbow Hinge Backhand 399
Pinching the Middle 400
Attacking Unattackable Balls 400

GLOSSARY 403

INDEX 413